



Social Venture Partners International
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Social Venture Partners (SVP), VISTA

2012-2013

Phoenix and Tucson, AZ

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9
State Legislative District(s): 24 & 28
Service Area by County/City: Phoenix, Maricopa County; Tucson, Pima County
Project Federal Share: \$27,852
Project Local Match: \$11,352
Community Volunteers Recruited: 184
Volunteer Hours Served: 9,483
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$948,300
*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

Community Need

The facts are disheartening: Arizona has the 5th worst conditions for families and children and the 2nd highest income gap in the country. People are not connected to the community or to each other. At Social Venture Partners (SVP), we want to change that. SVP cultivates effective philanthropists, strengthens nonprofits, and invests in collaborative solutions – building powerful relationships to tackle our community's social challenges. We amplify the impact of those people out to do good in three distinct ways:

- Connect and engage individuals, helping them make the greatest impact with their philanthropic giving;
- Fund and strengthen nonprofits, helping them take their vital work for kids and the environment to the next level;
- Invest in collaborative solutions, so those with a common cause can align their efforts and go farther, together.

Mission

Social Venture Partners inspires and promotes philanthropy using a venture capital approach to effect positive social change. SVP invests in innovative nonprofit organizations using a high-engagement model that pools the financial and professional resources of our Partners to achieve long-term community impact and to build a culture of philanthropy.

Program Impact

From 2010 through 2013, SVP Tucson funded *Reading Seed*, a children's literacy program helping children in Pima County "learn to read so they can read to learn." SVP donated \$75,000 in unrestricted funds to *Reading Seed* over three years.

A pivotal moment came when SVP Tucson and its Partners assisted in a merger of *Reading Seed* and 4 other literacy organizations in Tucson, forming a single entity now known as *Literacy Connects*. In the words of *Literacy Connects* Executive Director Betty Stauffer, "I don't think that the five-way merger would've happened if it hadn't been for all the support and expertise that we got from Social Venture Partners. It was the Partners working with us that made it possible."

SVP Arizona has spent the last four years on a journey to invest directly with a public high school in urban Phoenix. This excursion has engaged our partners and our investees in ways we could not have imagined when we started. Dr. Chad Gestson, Principal of Camelback High School, saw a chance to realize his goal of systematically changing the culture within his school by partnering with SVP. Since SVP's investment of close to \$60,000 along with hundreds of hours of time and expertise, CBHS has increased student attendance, graduation rates, and test scores. Dr. Gestson stated: "We are so fortunate to have SVP Arizona investing in our future. Their business expertise brings a valuable perspective to us in the education community. They willingly work alongside students, teachers, staff, families and alumni to ensure that our school is competitive and relevant in the 21st Century."



Above, Literacy Connects volunteer Jeff Jordan works with young children as a Reading Seeds reading coach. The creation of the organization Literacy Connects was a result of the efforts of SVP Partners in Tucson over several years.

National Priority Area

Increase the pool of available grant dollars and skilled volunteering support available to promising nonprofit organizations working with disadvantaged and vulnerable populations.

History

The SVP model was created in 1997 in Seattle. The vision of the founders was a philanthropic community that borrowed from venture capital practices and made highly engaged investments of money, resources and business expertise in local nonprofit organizations.

In Phoenix, SVP was founded in 1999 by local business leader and philanthropist, Jerry Hirsh, after seeing the innovative partnership in Seattle. Since inception, SVP in Phoenix has invested over \$3.9 million, along with thousands of volunteer hours, to strengthen over 60 nonprofits in greater Phoenix. Also, with the addition of the *Fast Pitch* program it has been able to reach another 60 nonprofits that bring value to the capacity of their organizations.

In Tucson, the SVP vision captured the attention of Tucson's Helaine Levy, executive director of Diamond Family Philanthropies. She thought it would be a good fit for Tucson. Levy, along with Steve Alley, then CEO of the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona (CFSA), and with the support of a group of founding partners, brought SVP Tucson into being in October 2006. Since its inception, SVP Tucson has invested over \$450,000 and countless hours in 7 well-deserving non-profits in the Tucson area.

Partnerships

SVP Tucson currently has over 75 Partners, comprised of individuals, households, and other groups in the Tucson area that share the SVP vision. SVP Tucson also has established partnerships with local businesses and corporations in the area, including Arizona Public Media, Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, Film Creations, LP&G, Nextrio, and Pima Medical Institute.

SVP in Phoenix has 138 partners. With the development of its *Fast Pitch* program, the organization has established partnerships and volunteer opportunities with local businesses and corporations in the area that include, SCF Arizona, Avnet, MAC6, Alliance Bank, APS, Fidelity Investments, and numerous law firms.

Program Activities

The organizations that SVP partners with are tackling some of our society's most entrenched problems – and they are ready to take their work to the next level. They've recognized ways that their organizations could be stronger, and are working with SVP to make that happen. Through SVP, a Partner can pool and stretch their dollars, invest in vetted nonprofits, engage in shared learning, and volunteer their time and talent.

VISTA Program

The two SVP organizations in Arizona each have one AmeriCorps VISTA member on their staff.

The Programs and Communications Associate position seeks to expand and deepen SVP's work with nonprofits supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in Phoenix and Tucson.

The VISTA members work on local projects, including:

- Recruitment and retention of engaged donors/volunteers;
- Data collection and evaluation of capacity building efforts with nonprofits and philanthropists;
- Philanthropic educational initiatives, designed to familiarize Partners with local issues and needs.

The VISTA members also participate in a working group which focuses on three project benefits to the entire network of SVP's:

- Development and implementation of social media communication strategies;
- Preparation of case studies, documenting the impact of SVP capacity building initiatives on nonprofit outcomes;

Develop and maintain network-wide databases as needed.

Information collected for these databases will focus on best practices and innovative new practices which have the potential to go network-wide.



SVP Tucson AmeriCorps VISTA Erin Henderson volunteers at the Community Food Bank with coworkers from the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona on September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance.